



Perception and Cognition: Essays in the Philosophy of Psychology

By Gary Hatfield

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How do we see? This question has fascinated and perplexed philosophers and scientists for millennia. In visual perception, mind and world meet, when light reflected from objects enters the eyes and stimulates the nerves leading to activity in the brain near the back of the head. This neural activity yields conscious experiences of a world in three dimensions, clothed in colors, and immediately recognized as (say) ground, sky, grass, trees, and friends. The visual brain also produces nonconscious representations that interact with other brain systems for perception and cognition and that help to regulate our visually guided actions. But how does all of this really work? The answers concern the physiology, psychology, and philosophy of visual perception and cognition. Gary Hatfield's essays address fundamental questions concerning, in Part I, the psychological processes underlying spatial perception and perception of objects; in Part II, psychological theories and metaphysical controversies about color perception and qualia; and, in Part III, the history and philosophy of theories of vision, including methodological controversies surrounding introspection and involving the relations between psychology and the fields of neuroscience and cognitive science. An introductory chapter provides a unified overview; an extensive reference list rounds out the volume.

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Review

"...it should be stressed how the papers collected together in this book represent an important contribution to the philosophy of psychology. Hatfield's impact on the field is undeniable, and anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of the nature of his contribution would be well advised to read this volume." -- *Philosophical Psychology*

About the Author

Gary Hatfield has studied visual perception for more than three decades. His works include experimental studies of shape constancy, theoretical papers on perception, and philosophical studies of the fundamental concepts and theories of visual perception and cognition and their history. His work in the history and philosophy of psychology extends from the seventeenth century to current controversies on qualia and perceptual representation. He has published books on *Descartes and the Meditations* and *The Natural and the Normative: Theories of Spatial Perception from Kant to Helmholtz*, and he has translated Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. He is the co-founder of the Visual Studies undergraduate program at the University of Pennsylvania and has co-taught, with psychologists and art historians, courses and seminars on all aspects of visual perception.

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